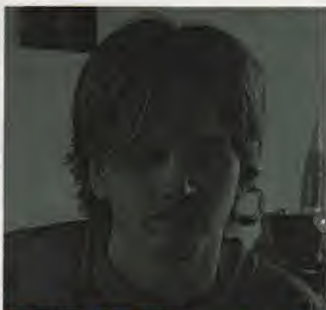


Edge City 2003







First off we'd like to thank the following contributors to Mu Xi's 2003 edition of Edge City Magazine. The list of individuals is as follows:

**Editorial Board:**

Cara Jones, Joel Lee, Chris Kubrick, Erin L. Delaney, Allison Armentrout, Jacob Cassella, and Bobbi Button

**Layout and design for the journal:**

Chris Kubrick, Erin L. Delaney, and Joel Lee

Also, we would like to extend our thanks to:

William Diffenderfer for offering his time to copyedit the entire journal. With so little time to complete this journal, it is important to thank everyone one last time for working so hard on this publication.

The Mansfield University Print Shop for making this publication possible.

**Officers for 2002-03 Mu Xi Literary Society**

Bobbi Button – President

Chris Kubrick –Vice President

Cara Jones –Secretary

Morgan Hugo –Treasurer

Erin L. Delaney –Public Relations

Dr. John Ulrich –Advisor

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Insert:  
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Carmen Chase

**"Do I dare disturb the universe in a minute there is time  
for visions and revisions which a minute can reverse."**

**~T.S. Eliot**

## Letter from the Editors:

I'm not sure I really understand the idea of a letter from the Editor. It seems almost like masturbation; I pleasure myself by getting to write whatever I want, and you the reader have to endure. By the way, you also have to laugh. Cue the Laugh Card.

Frankly speaking, this is not quite as momentous an occasion as the resurgence of Edge City last year from a few year hiatus, but we still like to believe we have some importance as you read through this year's issue. I'd like to pretend, if you will, that we have elevated the standards of even the New Yorker. This is, of course, not a bash against the magazine, nor an attack of those involved with it; I believe we really kicked some ass this year and hope that you all will enjoy it. If not, I ask that you drink more alcohol. (a Hey Dumb Reader Laugh Card)

I remember as a little kid that I would draw people's hearts on their shirts. I'm not sure why, nor am I sure what that has to do with this magazine, anyone or anything involved in it, or with this letter, but I do suppose it is a necessary bit of information to know should you want to blackmail me later. (a Hey Dumb Reader Laugh Card)

I'd like to acknowledge the people who sent submissions in because if you hadn't, (warning: Chris Kubrick bashing ahead) then we would have been forced to ask Chris to write everything. Thank you also to the people involved in narrowing down the submissions, especially for having to put up with me while I sat on my elitist stool (On a side note, I'd like to thank Pier One for providing my stool). Also, I'd like to personally thank Dr. Ulrich for buying me dinner down at the University Club. Oh, and for being the advisor or something, too. (a Hey Dumb Reader Laugh Card)

Honestly, though, (warning: unabashed clichés ahead) I'd really like to acknowledge the people that => dared to write <= because few things can be as => infuriating, and obviously, as rewarding, <= although I'm not sure going bald over this is really worth it. And of course, mad props go out to caffeine without which the world would not function. By the way, I say pop, not soda, so take that, nerds.

Smooches, ~ Joel and the Heartbreaker Posse ~ xoxoxoxoxoxo

## Unoriginal

I look at the moon and I do not see that luminous pearl in the sky.  
I do not see that man, that notorious voyeur incessantly watching,  
Ever listening to our unoriginal movements and conversations.  
What I see is a naked rock with a neon light shining on it.  
The light hides nothing; it exposes to the world all imperfections:  
The cavernous dimples, or discolorations some term as seas.  
What is this rock? Nothing. It is nothing;  
It contains no personality, no emotions, no beliefs, and nothing original,  
For it has existed far more than many millenniums.  
Since the beginning of time it has sat there like a lump,  
Festering with the expressions it cannot express.  
And when I look in the mirror I am surprised not to see the same thing.  
How is it I do not resemble that rock,  
That island in space devoid of personality and emotion?  
Why is it that a person who cannot express an original thought,  
That cannot live a life that has not been lived before,  
Why can they not be something nearly as desirable as the moon,  
As that unoriginal, unemotional, unpersonal, incandescent disc  
miraculously floating in That celestial place?  
And why is it that an individual can be so ineffectual and yet, still contain  
vivacious color In their skin and hair.  
How is it that a person can exist devoid of originality?  
I live in a box that surrounds my soul simultaneously protecting the world  
from what I Term myself.  
My cage is self made, yet I cannot escape.  
I am what one could, should, and would term an impotent wonder.  
That is... if they could escape from their box.

~Carmen Chase



### Three Generations of The Onyx in Me

#### I.

I watch in awe as the sideways  
eye of grandma's onyx moves  
to avoid the rolling dough  
crossing the  
floured butcher block.  
A grip strong enough to  
conquer and discover  
had settled for  
rolling and kneading.

Cherry polish conceals  
yellowing across nails  
that longed to dance an entire  
Saturday night away.  
Ridges along her knuckles  
support the bone  
where her onyx reigned for years.

The black onyx in me  
remembers  
the style of Flossie.

#### II.

I study the octagon  
eye  
of my aunt's onyx  
joining the rhythm of her whistling  
as she swipes blue across  
her dreamy teenage lids.  
Lids full of visions enchanted by  
prince charming and a castle  
cleaned by servants.

Next to her flamed roses over black

satin cover a treasure chest where  
the geometric silver  
eye  
of her onyx perched during the week.  
A treasure chest full of zirconias and turquoise  
the poor girl gems.  
Longing for the pearls and diamonds  
of rich girl reality.

The black onyx in me  
remembers  
the passion of Gail.

### III.

I smile proudly as the diamond shaped  
eye  
of my onyx  
reflects in the mirror of my vanity.  
Attached to the hand that has discovered  
new passions to conquer every day.

Tonight, the beat will guide  
the motion of my snapping  
fingers where the  
eye  
of my onyx sits behind the  
cherry polish as my hips  
swing with the rhythm.

Across the room towers the  
oak case lined  
with deep forests of velvet  
where the silver marquee  
eye  
of my onyx stands—sometimes.

~Bobbi Button

### Untitled

I do not have great beauty,  
My figure could be less,  
My brown eyes do not match  
the gold in each long tress.  
I'm not another Einstein,  
I do not possess great wealth,  
and now I'm finished  
heaping compliments upon myself.

~Allison Armentrout

### Waking the Memory From the Night Before.

Requiem of memory and intrigue  
A night weighed down with beer and lust,  
an open back,  
touch,  
No longer escaping early morning mystery.  
Crowded with florescent beauty,  
sliding down given paths,  
falling into openings of open legged nature, wined and dined.  
Taken home—  
building a metropolis at midnight,  
hiding the last of the night,  
Midnight.  
In glances and the brush.  
Past back from east to west, then  
west to east,  
east to west.  
Trying to re-settle an old frontier.  
I am no pioneer; I have always and forever been here.  
Here in this place.  
Its given wonder, which grips a soul  
to step outside the rain

into themselves,  
into tight questionable ari.

A breeze,  
with a scent we can remember.

In dapper, tracking memories down  
skin.  
On wrapping reasoning, close, and frightened.  
Words pull closer—bodies—  
giving into highways and rest stops.  
Pulling over to laugh.

Black strung spaghetti straps  
tumbling under eyes of onlookers  
laughing  
glances land lips to skin.  
Territorial attempts to save tomorrow.  
Pressure to hide in the light of some broken jukebox subsides in  
arms.

The records are dusty and never heard.

Not all that aware, the TV flashes  
a three hour savior , but we mention the last six seconds  
and nothing more.

It's not our generation  
there's nothing worth hearing which may block out time,  
injuring eternity aside the pond.  
(it's your pond feral student—feral guest.)

~Jon Mazzaraco

**"Writing is a dreadful Labour, yet not so  
dreadful as Idleness." ~Thomas Carlyle**

are there any revolutions left?

from a photo of people jumping out of the WTC

it was strange because he figured it'd be a difficult decision,  
then he figured his entire life would replay itself in his head  
as he fell, but, instead, most thoughts evaporated,  
leaving a freefalling focus on blurry-eyed, forgotten moments.

he remembered his daughter's fourth birthday,  
when they still lived in the Village,  
before the suburbs and the manicured lawns  
like the army's haircuts, actually, he didn't remember anything  
from that birthday except that it was the last one before moving,  
he heard his daughter laughing at the red ribbons  
on every present (his wife's idea), maybe she'll understand  
these decisions, his brown haired, freckled, loves-to-swing-and-laugh-at-  
her-tiny-white-and-grey-kitten daughter, maybe she'll understand this fall.

his clothes snapped around him, he nearly swallowed a button,  
he was being ripped  
like an old t-shirt's sleeves, and he remembered his wife  
stealing his favorite boston t-shirt in college  
and how he had to sing *more than a feeling* (and hit all the high notes)  
to get it back, in front of all her friends, and when she laughed  
her bangs went into her eyes and she nearly fell down the stairs,  
secretly he hoped she would so he could catch her,  
but her grace was not his to save.

his cheeks rolled like waves,  
his arms stretched out, he prepared to shake hands  
with the cracks in the sidewalk,  
and he smelled his leather baseball glove,  
husky and filled with summer,  
and heard the pop it made when playing catch  
with dad, before dad decided to die,  
before dad decided everything was too hard,  
before he had to make those yearly visits to dad's broken tombstone.

his ears gushed with wind, he was deaf,  
like being underwater,  
like the time he fell into the lake  
right after the ice melted, drunken dares with old friends,  
his wife's kisses in the hospital that screamed  
*fuck you, I love you, don't fucking make me deal with this again.*

his pants were flapping and cracking like a flag,  
his legs were discoing,  
he remembered his wife's smile  
when playing records (the beatles) on christmas eve,  
dancing in the tiny kitchen with the too loud refrigerator  
and peeling green paint stove,  
*wanna start a Revolution, yeah*  
leaping and splashing onto the floor,  
that's when she smiled, and asked him if he believed in revolutions  
and he said that as long as she didn't notice the holes in his socks  
when they danced he believed in anything.

his hair was wrenching itself from his scalp, its own revolution  
of pretending to fly like bird's feathers, wanting to escape, flutter  
down to the sidewalk at its own pace,  
would his brown curly haired-beatles-loving-chocolate-chip-cookie-dough-  
ice-cream-eating- sudden-3am-chats-in-bed wife understand?  
he knew his father would  
because he was there, on the sidewalk, to greet him  
and say thank you  
for the yearly visits to the grave and to say the people in the planes wanted  
to start a revolution  
and he didn't have to understand

~joel lee

## Open Window

I used to like to watch the rain  
slither down my windshield, waiting  
For each drop to merge.  
One racing against the other  
On your side of my white Dodge Aries.  
We'd stare at the world  
Through smoked stained glass.  
Windows cracked just enough  
To vent out the wafts of smoke  
Just enough to not get our arms wet.  
I remember you telling me how life was  
Like a character in a television screen,  
Mounted in a mobile home kitchen,  
Traveling down route 40 in some state  
We'd never been to  
Under a blazing sky of God's curious rage,  
And I hopelessly agreed.

But that was when we used to drop a lot of acid.  
When your Birkenstock footprint on my greasy windshield  
Was our mark of freedom.  
When we couldn't figure out what the rest of the world did  
On a Monday night  
If they weren't getting stoned.  
When we'd sneer at our parents' dead lives.  
When we'd spend hours doing our hair in braids  
And scavenging through bins at the Salvation Army  
For anything on the verge of ugly.  
When you liked the way I sang like Janis  
And I liked the way you wrote.  
When you'd call me at 3 am with your latest epiphany.

All before you left on that traveling magazine sales gimmick  
And met that asshole who slapped you around  
And knocked you up.

Before you decided that life wasn't worth much anymore  
And time was for decaying.  
Before you took up drinking and I took up diapers.  
All before we knew that one day we could pass each other  
On the street with nothing much to say.  
When life was a mobile home  
On a pagan pilgrimage  
Drifting through the desert  
On the day of our very own  
Summer solstice.

~Maria Butts

### The Stranger

I wake  
to splintered sunlight  
and icicle tears grinding  
bloody grooves in my face.  
I cannot forget how  
he crawled  
with his cold breath behind my skin  
where my heart and mind beat,  
how he stole  
between my eye and lid  
where I could not refuse  
to see him.

I could stab my heart  
until I drained his blood.  
Maybe I could wring my mind dry  
and he could drown in my thoughts.

But no—  
I would maybe die  
and I can't give him that  
satisfaction.

~Allison Armentrout



## To Jesse

We are all transient beings.  
We become, and are, for an arbitrary time.  
We import and export energies, in order to sustain,  
And exist, only relative, to the entities interacting with us,  
In an arbitrary space.

When first introduced we are of a questioning nature.  
We search for answers like they were treasures,  
As we find more answers,  
Like dictionary technicians,  
We manifest ourselves, building towers,  
Of minutia and capital,  
For the rest to see.

There comes a time when the question will rise again.  
The tower becomes nothing more than  
A complex manifestation of maintained opinions,  
On matters that only reveal themselves as significant,  
Because other infants are listening.

When we re-awaken to the question,  
Our tower crumbles,  
And the voices of childish praise,  
Become breezes of ghosts floating through our lonely minds.

Experience and moment reside,  
In that sanctuary,  
Of tower-less fields.  
I live there with you.  
No ego. No self.  
Though sometimes, I fall.

Without intent, you teach me to wander curiously,  
With heightened pulse of newborn, magnificent accident,  
Obscure answers surface from the sea, free of expectation.

I take up your wings,  
And again, I am boundless.

I apologize for allowing the immediate,  
To take hold of the music of my life.  
Beauty, is so alive, so real, and just as,  
If not more,  
Aware of us, as we are of her.  
My eyes re-open to your grace.  
I am honored to release, once again,  
From the grip of the engine of everyday,  
I remain peaceful, self-aware, and lovingly,  
In the sanctuary of your comforting cloud.

~John Gardner

### **Dirty Man**

There's a dirty man crouched on the curb,  
sipping convenient store coffee.  
His violent eyes, scanning,  
wanting to break  
someone, me.  
His shaking hands are shaking off  
the torment of his past, condemned  
to this eternal shaking.  
Shaking off the loneliness  
of twenty years wasted.  
Years when he first lost  
his four children to their shaming eyes.  
When his wife screamed  
she'd had enough  
of his hands pounding.  
Pounding out the pain of his father  
leaving with all he'd ever known.  
And he swore she'd never break

his soul, she'd never break free  
of this hell they created together,  
with eyes and arms and hands.  
Hands that won't leave you alone.  
Hands that scrape at every fiber,  
ripping flesh from bone  
and still that damn soul won't release.  
Hands that point and accuse.  
Hands that hold you down  
and won't let go until you're sobbing  
like an infant stolen from mother's breast.  
Hands that are shaking and shaking and shaking,  
until they can't shake anymore. And he glares at me,  
eyes blood shot and blue.  
As if to say,  
"What are you looking at, bitch?"

~Maria Butts

## Trees

trees grow, mature  
leaves grow, leave  
children grow, mature, leave.

~Sue Ann Strong

**only sex and flight lost time like this  
from Mike Doughty's "Transatlantic"**

my baby sent me to the late night liquor store  
so she could forget me.

I don't think she remembered  
that the streetlights remind me of strippers  
offering delight for a price,  
even though i always refused,  
of course.

headphones aren't a replacement  
for a red winter hat or blue ear muffs,  
but those don't make me boogie  
to michael jackson's *off the wall*  
alongside the icy puddles.  
she could always dance,  
but she never wanted to sing or even hum.  
i always wanted to wake up to her singing  
in the shower, out of key,  
so i could get lost in missed notes  
as i brushed my teeth.

i don't like staring at my shoelaces  
anymore because i've memorized  
the different places where they're falling apart.  
the cold air tastes like spearmint gum  
and makes me study the laces again,  
miserly hermit determined to cure the world  
through introspective philosophy  
derived from stained laces.  
she used to buy me new laces  
that i hid inside my sock drawer.

majestic telephone poles look bored  
with their domain,  
maybe they wish they had feet, not just arms,

always sending messages, but never getting the chance to travel.

i know the streetlights would hum to me,  
but i've decided to hum to them,  
hoping the icicles hanging from porches start crashing  
onto steps, creating a soundtrack  
to footsteps that i pretend are handclaps  
from an appreciative audience.

moonlight refuses to dazzle,  
too scared to pretend  
that imagery makes imagination worthwhile.  
i know my tattered brown jacket accepts the wind as a friend,  
but my skin is pissed.

shattering of omnipresent light bulbs,  
the glass melts into cracks,  
i come slipping slowly behind, feet dusting concrete,  
snowflakes wanting to glaze everything,  
my eyes focus on swirls of flakes  
beneath the discount beverage sign  
bumping into each other as they battle for landing position on my hair.

i lose interest in the philosophical musings  
of my shoes,  
so i focus on the change in my pockets.  
i don't believe it is unorthodox  
to save pennies,  
there's always the chance to use them  
for that time when the total charge ends in .something 9.  
i hope she likes captain morgan.

i never felt like leaving the house  
but now i'm wasting more time on a park bench.  
the cold surrounds me like a child  
giving a first hug.  
the leafless trees are whispering eulogies

Inhibition and apprehension pour out from my core, as  
Possibility and freedom are absorbed with infantile ease.  
My being is nourished through the silent chords,  
Of dissolved ego.

You give me wings to drift freely,  
With closed eyes,  
And heart overflowing with praise and beauty.  
Orchestral clouds warm me,  
With the music of life,  
Swirling the colors of unity.

Falling from the sky,  
From the embrace of the orchestral clouds and the warm breezes,  
The past comes rushing so quickly,  
Suddenly  
I am crushed upon the boulders of memory.

Eyes swelled with the ringing of yesterday,  
And shut by the everyday,  
Like from a knuckle's cut,  
The blood of the moment drips as a tear,  
To the collar of complacency and sadness.  
Once again the now is soiled,  
And possibility, distant.

When the slow boil of worry and confusion,  
Heats the chimes of wonder and curiosity,  
I am once again faced with that mirror,  
As time trickles, wastefully, down the kettle.

In that moment,  
If I listen to the one who is listening,  
I pull from the painful stones, and away from the immediate.  
I remember Grace and her timelessness,  
My eyes clear and the swirl of colors,  
Echo off the cliffs of emotion,

as they splay the light across the winterized graveyard.

she used to tell me  
that my fragmented wishes let her see reality  
because anything i got lost in  
must be a dream,  
so i asked if that even meant her  
and that's when she got pissed,  
told me she was tired  
of how i would save myself with undaunted cuteness,  
of how i loved folding laundry,  
of how i would only fold if i could watch what i wanted on tv,  
of how when we argued  
i always looked down at my shoelaces for inspiration.

she demanded to know  
why i spent so much time listening to my shoelaces,  
why i spent so much time staring at cracks,  
so i left her a note  
inside the tv guide  
before i left.

~joel lee

### **In front of the green dumpster**

The tips of crinkled wrapping rattle under the wind,  
While the bottom has soaked itself in a greasy resin and an orange blotch—  
A gunshot wound that is left to bleed out the corner.

A tinged edge of cheese is jutting out of the skylight tear.  
The mere shine of translucent green lays away,  
Stained with red and yellow prison stripes.

The ravaged meat, a gray torn carpet mashed into its yellow roof.  
Brown pillows try to comfort their inhabitants,  
But remain soaked and dissolving  
Under the cheap, yielding wrapper.

It all calls the sticky, barbed arms of black flies that pick and tear,  
While their lips become red, kissing crusted condiments—  
Looking like buzzing prostitutes, looting one of their own.

~Kory Sponaugle

### **The Chair**

stands alone  
you sit united  
relaxing in the union

~Sue Ann Strong

**"The etymologist finds the deadest word to  
have been once a brilliant picture. Language  
is fossil poetry."**

~Ralph Waldo Emerson from *The Poet*



### The Red Window

I've grown accustomed to the sound of work  
being done for me.

The first three months I sat  
because I was tired.

The next three  
because it was simply too hot.

And no, I'm just too  
round, too tired and too hot,

I've enclosed myself in with the humming of machines, washing and  
drying, rusting my smile. Electronic voices chattering away images, eating  
away my desires. I've secured my heavy ass in that sticky, black leather  
chair, rocking away these moments, breathing manufactured air through a  
rattling fan.

But today,  
because you told me,  
I waddled  
with my white plastic lawn chair  
and an old poetry book, that one  
I never got around to reading,  
and plunked myself down  
in the soft September shade.

*(The Red Window is a poetry collection by Pamela Stewart)*

~Maria Butts

### Our Own World

The meridians of mountains fold and ripple,  
while smoothed valleys turn into plateaus.

Writhing round riverbeds  
shift the patchwork towns and counties.

The fingertip forests float round  
and land where they like,  
smoothing out foothills.

White weatherless nimbi are gone from the skies.  
They create a fluffed fog to the north.  
It dimples and slides back and forth,  
in no real rhythm.

The ominous ocean is shrinking.  
Peninsulas and isthmi blend into mainland  
and forests are skittering across the water.

The bedrock bellows and bends  
as the land shifts and rolls.

The ocean disappears,  
with convex land buried deep.  
All that remains is a magnificent mountain range  
in the stitched country side.

She whispers, "I wouldn't give this for the world."

~Kory Sponaugle

**"Writing and travel broaden your  
ass if not your mind."**

**~Ernest Hemingway**

**she asked, what is beauty and i whispered her a lullaby**

it's a striped sweater hugging close  
underneath that smug smile.  
long conversations until 3am  
about driving my black dodge stratus to new Orleans,  
reading, drifting  
on a boat, drinking bourbon.

it's going to england  
and climbing hills, resting in the grass, indentations of ourselves,  
that bigger, darker, more perfect, more sinister, massive england sky.

it's listening to sigur ros and wanting  
to explore individual worlds of grass  
dipped in dew,  
the joy of a tiny insect.

wandering coming, alone, historic  
downtown, so cold  
everything has perfect definition,  
up and down the street at night, looking  
at each window, stopping in front of the coffeeshop.

it's milling around wegmans,  
scoping the foreign food section, and laughing  
at the lobsters in a tank,  
one is crawling on all others.  
King, he climbs the glass.

it's the drive with miles davis  
no other headlights—  
his trumpet dancing on the windows of the car.

it's sled-riding, snow covering my face,  
true laughter,  
the kind that makes you stop breathing.

it's walking up to the roof  
of a deserted building screaming stories,  
challenging the moon.

it's a jazz joint-dive bar  
filled with smoke  
and a sweaty band and a sweaty audience,  
drunk, peaceful, perfect,  
music seeping through the floor and the ceiling,  
draining into us, we are sublime

resting foreheads together, staring  
at the swirling creamer  
amidst the steam of the black coffee, sugar  
and talks until 4.

walks underneath the streetlights humming  
out of tune in the falling snow,  
dancing, watching, waiting  
to relax on the floor, heads on shoulders,  
magnetic fields playing—  
finally sleeping, dreaming of your hair.

it's the godliness of swinging,  
the feeling of almost being weightless,  
back and forth, forever in flight,  
dropping, rising, joy.

it's the glasses i saw on that girl today  
outside cedarcrest, did she look my way, did i smile?  
it's wondering if she'd want to investigate  
ceiling tiles and talk about 80s cartoons, childhood dreams, 5-years-old  
marriages, haircuts,  
and the ability to want to listen.

it's all night convenience stores

meandering through the few aisles, out of the rain,  
drying off for the chance to get soaked again.

it's showers at noon that last half an hour  
because the world is already functioning without me,  
hot hot water and i'm almost sleeping again.

it's overhearing tiny parts of conversations of people i'll never know,  
...and that's when i told him...

...she was only 10...

...like the way the sky turns pink...

...you could never cook that...

...i like my vacations to...

....what? no...

it's art with heart like stephen berg

it's sentences that meld together like whitman,

it's the flashback

of tripping down stairs and whatever else happened that night...

~joel lee

### **derangement is our savior**

We catapult by flashing road signs,  
the headlights creating a miniscule replication of god's glory,  
or at least that's what Sebastian says  
in the passenger seat beside me.

He wonders aloud if signs ever ask  
about the cities emblazoned on their chests  
like Hawthorne's bloody letter  
and I tell him, as the realist, inanimate objects don't think  
and he says, then why do you talk to your Volkswagen Jetta?

In the backseat, riding along with the moving garbage dump  
of fast food brown bags and (hopefully) empty cans,  
a stained map chirps directions that we ignore.  
The wheels somersault over the PennDOT patchwork,  
and Sebastian says, I have to piss, pull over.

You realize how dark it is when the lights don't infringe on tree lines  
and your friend skips into it like some child  
running into his first house of mirrors.  
I'm the parent knowing he'll return, yet left wondering  
if that black will tongue him, chew him, and swallow him—  
and then there he is, back at the car complaining  
about piss drops on his pants, and I can breathe  
out the brick I've been holding right behind my tongue  
and pretend I never worried.

The sign says *next exit thirteen miles*,  
and he says, do you think we should take it?  
Then, to himself, No, thirteen is bad luck,  
even though there were twelve disciples and then Jesus  
so that makes thirteen, you'd suppose people would embrace it more.  
What about non-christians, I ask.  
That, he says, has little to do with superstitions.

The black Jetta bounds forward,  
humming its Oms,  
carrying its two passengers and their baggage  
on its way to nirvana (or a complete breakdown,  
maybe it's the same).

I was told once that mirrors don't lie,  
so I'm scared to ask I really look as old as the rear view says:  
hey, yes you, I know you think you're escaping  
that bald spot on the crown of your head,  
but you're still caged inside this car's doors.  
the car is asking, does this define your sense of freedom?

we need to get rid of the trash  
in the back seat, I say,  
as Sebastian snaps back  
to attention. Take this next exit, he says,  
it has to go somewhere.

~joel lee

## **bastard child of stained convictions counting 6 marks**

i wish my father was listening  
to me because i'll forget everything  
i say. words are the bastard children of god.  
jesus' brothers and sisters  
that he manipulated so i feel guilty  
now as i worship their arrangement over a picture of him  
with the wrong color skin. i'm using them,  
like clouds i can't feel them, i seem them hanging, collapsing, huffing,  
and i cry. these tears are not rain,  
just a fucking biological function, too many tear ducts,  
like the ducks that dawdle by the pond behind my house,  
they shit all over the porch while i stalk them  
with a fake bb gun. their quacking fear  
intertwines with my quaking warbling  
leaving cobwebs of hostility  
criss crossed around the yard until i feel that bastard white jesus  
smiling down on my personal parade of paradise.  
adam and eve have shit on me.  
i killed their adored son and now i'm a serial hunter of ducks.  
i have phosphorus red war paint of my cheeks,  
i ignore my father's complaints  
of injun interest (i am his god) as i slink over the porch's boards  
which pray to me for another coat of browning stain-like the crayon i used  
to color  
in jesus before the priest cuffed me  
and my father damned my pursuit of nigger happiness-  
my clothes are ironed with nazi precision  
and the ducks are my jews, i'll make my father tell me he fucking loves me,  
o.k., dad, i'll worship hitler and won't tell mom  
that miles davis would be a better guest than grandpa,  
that i find billie holliday's voice sexilicious,  
that masturbating while listening to *god bless the child* makes me smile,  
not turn red and ponder a scintillating confession,  
that the fire and brimstone confessional box makes my hands melt  
and droop into my pockets,

my eyes flop around and my brain drip down my earlobe  
turning into a crusty puddle on my pants  
for my mom to wash and wonder about-  
i'm slithering after ducks with a broken bb gun  
and they're shitting on the porch and in the burnt grass yard  
and i give up. fuck the ducks.  
i never liked white feathers, especially ones that weren't very clean.  
i'll just take one  
from that used toilet paper looking lawn and keep it in my room,  
on the wall, next to the looming pencil marks i use to count  
how many times my father has smiled at me.

~joel lee

### We Count

The anchored oak shudders over us  
And snows his chromatic weather down.

We count  
the flakes that make us a patchwork.  
She and I, and all of the  
red and  
orange and  
brown

I am saddened by his going and wonder  
Why he goes at all?  
She tells me the leaves are tired and must  
rest  
"They cannot hold on forever, they live as  
we do."

I ask if she will hold on  
forever to me?  
Or will she become



tired?  
She tells me  
forever is a long time

But while she is here,  
she will count with me.  
~Kory Sponaugle

### america, To Allen

Allen, america has changed so much from when you were here. my america is in ruins. The red white and blue bundle of balloons try to escape from the tree across the street. Twenty, no thirty, feet in the air they can't break free. No matter where they go they will always be red white and blue. They have no choice, but to hang on and sway with the wind. america hangs on for the ride. Stuck in towering treetops because one little boy let them go and forgot them forever. I stand and watch america wave in the trees, clinging onto any hope we can, any hope that will save us from ultimate disaster. The disaster of our self-inflicted downfall, our revelation-esque end,

the muted thundering bombs we hear in our dreams thousands of miles away made by the corporations that america cannot escape from. They have taken over america, Allen, and we've needed each other more than ever. They can't hear the piercing screams of bombs like we can; . . .

they can't hear the howls of murder in our daydreams, in our nightmares, in our middle class childhood and adult unstreetwise television trust with the cluttered book minds sighing in sorrow. I don't even have cable tv or an antenna and my hipster jazz cds only add to the sadness of the truth of my america.

In the land of the free my first amendment right is slowly fading, Allen what would you do? I've taken up studies on what's behind the war but *I ain't gonna study war no more*—at least that's what the protest song says. So how can america burn the books of homeland security, terror alert color codes, and justified war when every moment is spent watching the boob tube news? america lies in black box cable access rubble I see it for the

future. King George II has led us astray, led us in twain, led us to the ends of the universe and to the depths of hell salvaging a minute white noise connection between the NYC's tower disaster, some dead guy on a dilator, and a military leader who our *dictator* believes (from his old testament god) is the mastermind behind it all.

I don't understand it Allen I thought my america was full of beauty and promise—all I can recall is bloodshed biochemicals bombs footsoldiers farcical "friendly-fire" snipers suicidal-psychos and silencing the opposed. They're suppressing US Allen, how would you have reacted? Should I mention the words cock or cunt or phallus or scream rape to let virgin america know she is being taken? Maybe it's not enough Allen, maybe modernism took a sadistic turn. Our country america is a living entity of the modernist movement.

All I see is dark skies through night-vision glasses, bombs glowing in silent shades of green neon like a seven eleven beacon—grafting my green groundling-eyes with yours and grandfather Whitman's america, Allen. The skies are always gray here Allen and the children never play anymore. america says the communists are still coming. the north koreans have us in their lazer sights ready to send an a-bomb over to frisco to the bridge to l.a. to san diego. america says she's ready to "assess the threat."

Remember the city that never sleeps? It's up all night watching the whorehouse of late night tv pushing for "shock and awe's" total destruction so our reality tv programming is real and so we pay 40 cents less for a gallon of gas to the pimp of the white house while begging for extra war footage like a spam commerical. More please.

The balloons are still lost clinging amongst the trees so we put flags up to show we're not dissenters (or anti-american). We want to show we are patriots, to show we are supporters, to show the FBI that they should skip over our houses like putting lamb's blood on our front doors.

That's not my america, Allen. That's not my america, Whitman. That's not my america, Emerson.

~Erin L. Delaney

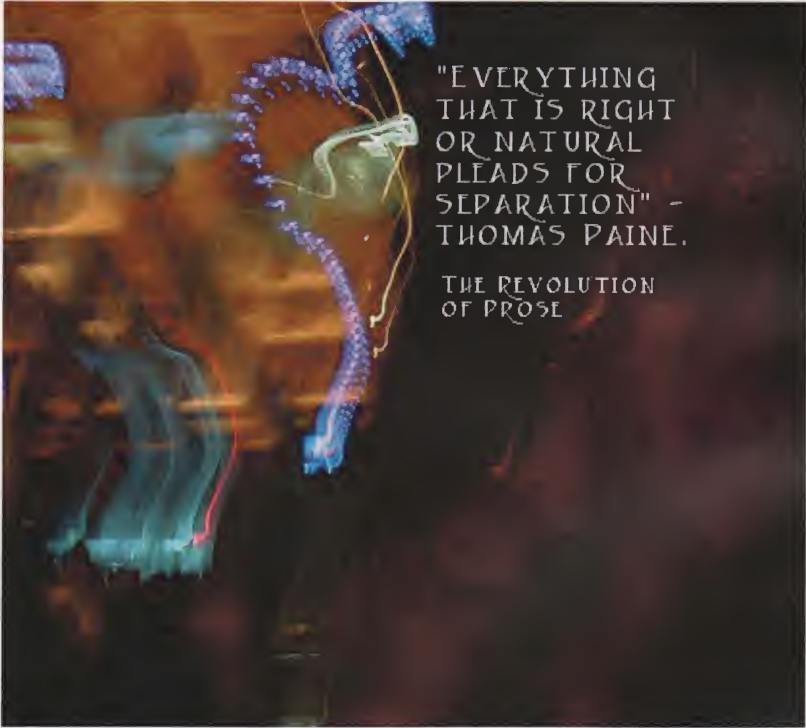
### **i stopped looking at suicide as an end**

because inside the bubbles known as moments, there disappears any chance to explain. i can feel the way it slides away, like being too drunk to walk, the sidewalk rocking unsteadily, sea legs over the cracks. i've left it all unfinished, and i have questioned nothing. i have been duped by the very organs i praise. the goals have floated, exasperated by my indifference. i'd scream if i felt like breathing. it's only a phase, i swear. i'm counting from 1 to 10 over and over, hoping to find the secrets of the universe somewhere between 7 and 8, convinced that 8 sideways is infinity so it has to have a deeper meaning. i want to hide underneath my desk, hoping that the wind doesn't have the fingers to reach me there. watch as my smile cracks and i drift back into clichés. *if i'm just bad news, then you're a liar*. there's no point in segmenting the blocks that have built themselves on top of my thinking. can i comprehend forever? is it hidden inside the circles of the 8? infinity is forever is inside the circle is inside my eye is inside everything i've seen is the way i once asked you, how are you today? it's a linear thought pattern that really means nothing. bullshit piled on top of bullshit backed up by all the apologies i've ever given. at 8 years old i learned to keep quiet. and that's a lie. but, i'm blaming everything on 8, on infinity, on forever. watch the fog strip away the fears along with my top 2 layers of skin. graft it back on, maybe i'll be a new person, one who won't make you question yourself. i can outline everything with a black sharpie marker so you know where to cut me out and paste me onto your wall. i'll try to protect all your pictures. i'm afraid of staring at the ground anymore.

~joel lee

**“... somehow through all this I found a way to make my peace with the recent past by turning it into Word.”**

**~Charles Johnson**

An abstract, dark background with swirling, ethereal patterns in shades of blue, green, and yellow. The patterns resemble smoke or liquid in motion, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall tone is mysterious and artistic.

"EVERYTHING  
THAT IS RIGHT  
OR NATURAL  
PLEADS FOR  
SEPARATION" -  
THOMAS PAINE.

THE REVOLUTION  
OF PROSE

### Cadenced Frivolous Feet

"Forget the syphilis man, you're points beyond," the disc jockey on WSTD morning radio barked. The clock radio programmed to turn on at 5:45 a.m. Now, it is 6:05, and I am still lying in my head.

I generally wake jovial.

I am a very punctual man.

I participate in a carpool.

I am a reliable man.

Today is my turn to drive.

I am underestimated, frequently misinformed, delicate, fragile, and often told that I am thin-skinned.

I suppose that I won't be doing any driving today. I imagine that anyone in my position would assume the same.

Picture my dismay. At 5:51 a.m. I lifted the covers from my *sexf* and abysmally discovered that I had no feet. I know that both of my feet were perfectly positioned in their designated locale before entering my bed the prior evening, for I recall using all of my digits to count the number of days it would take until I could purchase a new, and much needed, refrigerator magnet. I had both feet then. Now look at me.

My wife left me yesterday. She sat me down and then kneeled, all the —while stroking my top; she looked earnest. "Sometimes," she began, judging and weighing her tone, "people fall... *out* of love." She hugged me and walked out the door. She took my goldfish. My feet are gone. A salad sounds delightful.

My morning ritual contains many constants, but I never added the variable "salad" into the equation. I typically find myself eating a slice of potato bread. The kind made from potatoes. A glass of juice perhaps, but never a salad. I'd like to change that equation.

I would also like to telephone someone, and maybe, possibly, answer the door. The bell has chimed at least four times since my discovery. Through the door, her voice sounds muffled. "Vanity's Cheap," she says. I could be wrong about her name. It might be "Randy's Sleep," or, rather, "Beatrice's Peep." On the other hand, maybe it's simply "Vanity's Cheap." Regardless, I can't get to the door without my feet.

The "My Three Sons" theme is playing on the radio. I like that song. There's something about the opening scene of the show; the way that the cartoon feet tap along with the tune. I'd like to tap my feet along with it. On second thought, I *can't* tap my feet along with it. One must have feet to tap *with* before tapping along with the tapping feet of the "My Three Sons" theme.

Vanity's rapping on the door now. She knows that I am home. She says something about beauty products and skin care ointments. It's probably voodoo tools, or, perhaps, a mediocre wall paint and wood varnish accessory kit that she's trying to solicit. Ten years ago, it wouldn't even be heard of... a woman selling wall paint and wood varnish accessory kits. That's absurd!

I call to her, explaining my dilemma. I tell her that I can't reach the door to let her in so that she can explain what a great deal I'd be receiving if I purchased airline tickets, luggage, and candle a set from her. I tell her that if she has her feet to go ahead and kick in the door, or, perhaps, run and find help. My feet are inside the icebox preparing a salad. I can hear them tapping my toes to "My Three Sons." They are rolling out the lettuce. Its cellophane crackles with ambiguous glee. Out come the red ripe tomatoes and the carrots, followed by the cheeses, and the dressing (that was made fresh yesterday, before my wife declared that she was leaving me for her brother). They are making themselves a salad, mocking me; tapping away happily... taps taps. There is nothing that I can do.

Vanity's Cheap says something through the door. It sounds like "I'll get help." Maybe she said, "Let's trade kelp," or, perhaps, "loosen your belt." Maybe it was just simply, "I'll get help."

It's 6:30 a.m. now, and I am wondering why a salesperson would be soliciting so early in the morning. Why aren't those damned feet using green pepper.

~Noel Swasta

### Should we, somewhere else?

Unsteady circles, balanced on three curled columns each, rest in a pinstriped shade under the awning on rickety rocks. My table rocks in a rhythm with my chair, they both stand with their feet in cracks and crevices. Flat Coca-cola sits stagnant in my gold-rimmed porcelain coffee cup on an unmatching, chipped saucer. The ovate table, I notice it is more oval than circle, is stained with the ghosts of many cups before mine and dried mustard is crusting on the opposite edge.

The waitress smiles when she asks to freshen my 'café.' She has a nice smile and shiny brown hair. I am hungry and ask her for something. What would I like? I tell her to surprise me and she is gone again. I sip my Coke and watch a man shoot through the crowd on his red bicycle. He juts and jukes around old wandering mothers and glides past lost painters searching for inspiration. Some god's statue spouts water from his mouth, and some from a wrist with no hand, into a penny-laden pool. I watch children dance and argue, all the time throwing their allowance into the pool of some fairytale.

She returns with sandwiches and coffee cake, for my 'café,' she says. She sets them down and I thank her, just to see her smile again. Once she is gone, I lift up my chair from its hilly terrain and put my back in the sun. I am now looking in at the rest of the people who are here without me. They eat and jabber and don't notice our fine waitress. I see fat men in sweaty Oxfords pointing at their menu and their watch. Young families arguing over their children, who are eating holes in their bread to peer through. An old couple stares at each other for a long time and I am moved by it. Only to see the old man mouth "the meatballs are good here" to her and her hands drop from his.

The waitress goes to the table next to mine to serve an old woman in an ugly hat and bright orange scarf. As she turns to go back behind the glass with Fernando's gracefully painted on it, I touch her slender wrist. Yes? Sit down with me, I say and move my chair back to its original home. I-I can't, I have to...



Sit with me and watch what happens.

She sits with an astute posture in the chair opposite mine and her hands settle in her lap. She gives me a minute before she leans in and questions: What is going to happen? I lean into her and whisper a smile in her ear. Look out there, at the fountain and the crowds, I say and give her a minute to take in the picture I have seen. Then look in at all the people eating their lunches and conversing, I tell her and she turns her back into the sun with me. Alright.

She waits. I still do not understand what is to happen.

We are to fall in love.

In all of this?

Should we, somewhere else?

~Kory Sponaugle





## Burger With the Works

The kiss was unexpected in an expected sort of way. That is to say, Vivien had expected to be kissed sometime tonight, but she was not expecting it right then. "Right then" was immediately after she had taken a large (too large, actually, but the pickle was tough and she was trying to avoid sawing at it with her teeth or grabbing it with her free hand and ripping it off like some kind of prehistoric caveman!) bite of her hamburger. Greg took advantage of the fact that her mouth was otherwise occupied and incapable of registering a complaint, and planted one squarely on her lips.

Vivien, alternately trying to speak and find a comfortable place in her mouth for the wad of burger, choked instead. And when she had succeeded in swallowing, blotting her eye makeup which was running down her face because her eyes were tearing from having nearly died, and breathing, in that order, she came up spitting.

"What a lousy, rotten..."

Greg covered her mouth with his hand and said very calmly, "Viv, I had to do it and it seemed like the right time."

"The right time! The right time?! I had a mouth full of hambur..." She let her indignant reply trail off because she was looking into those sincere eyes that were as green as the new summer grass, and she just couldn't be mad.

Greg was the youngest of four boys, and, at age 24, was a handsome young man. He was already deeply tanned, although it was not even June, and his brown hair was curly enough to give him an unruly look that was a little dangerous and a lot appealing, and to more than just the occasional woman. In fact, Greg had learned at an early age that women found him attractive. Most of the women who flirted with him were older, career-minded women who neither needed nor wanted anything more serious than a pleasant diversion from their hectic schedules. Sometimes Greg obliged them, sometimes he did not.

Greg had been dating Vivien exclusively now for just more than a month. Aside from his one-night stands (He never referred to them as conquests because he was never quite sure who was getting the best of whom.) he had never really had a relationship with a woman.

Vivien. Vivien! He loved to think it. He loved to say it. He supposed he loved her.

"You suppose WHAT?" A screech that somehow managed to be words, too, shattered his little reverie. "You suppose what?" Vivien asked again, this time in the range of normal human hearing since the first had drawn the attention of everyone in the place.

Oh, geez. He'd done it this time for sure. Greg had no idea that he'd spoken out loud until Viv's disbelief had manifested itself vocally and ruptured his eardrums. He could understand her credulity, he supposed, since he had not even initiated holding her hand before, but now, in the space of about 2 minutes...

"I wish you would quit 'supposing' out loud, Greg like I'm not sitting in the chair directly across from you."

Greg, trying desperately to justify his actions, simply gaped silently at Viv. It was incredible that he had kissed a mouth full of hamburger and now he was in love. He succeeded, minimally, in collecting his scattered thoughts, which would have been easier had a grenade gone off in his head, and smiled. "I suppose we should get married," he said, like he said it every day. But his hands shook badly and leaked onto his khaki pants, and his heart was clanking so loudly against his chest that he just knew that was why the man at the next table was looking at him so oddly. Greg actually thought he felt his hair curling more tightly as Vivien looked at him calmly with her green, green eyes, so like his own, and, in a gesture he had grown to love, captured her strawberry mane over one shoulder. "I suppose we should," she said, as though she accepted proposals in burger joints every day.

That had been forty years ago today.

Vivien sat at her kitchen window watching the breeze ruffle through her flowers. Greg had been gone now for seven months, a victim of a fast-acting cancer. Vivien was grateful that he had suffered very little, but the emptiness inside her cried every night for him to still be, in any condition, beside her. Sometimes, her hand would steal across his pillow, and she would fall asleep pretending it was his broad, smooth chest.

They had had no children. It had been a mutual decision. Greg's brothers had provided more than enough little ones to fulfill grandparental desires, so there had been no pressure for Greg and Viv to join the parenting scene. Cruises and long trips, expensive gifts and other extravagances, although affordable, had not occupied their time, either. They had, instead, spent nearly 40 years getting to know each other in the most simple and

profound ways. Vivien remembered how Greg used to take her out on a starry night and stare skyward and then into her eyes and then into the sky again and back into her eyes and say softly, breathlessly, "There's no comparison."

A single rose had come for her on every birthday and every holiday with a piece of Greg's soul written on the attached card. Vivien had, of course, kept all his notes and cards and every petal from 40 years of roses. She slept with his last note to her under her pillow. "Viv," it read, "All the petals from all the roses in this world could not match the fragrance from your love. Thank you for 'supposing.'"

It had been his last words to her, written quietly and sincerely in a shaky scrawl minutes before Greg had closed his eyes forever. With his last vestige of strength, he had pushed the note into her hand as she sat sleeping in the chair beside his hospital bed. The last thing he saw were her eyes, still the greenest of greens even after all these years, opening at his touch.

Vivien re-read her note, took a deep breath from her box of petals, bit into her hamburger, got stuck on a pickle, and smiled.

~Allison Armentrout

### Cheap Pen

The sign at the college bookstore read \$1.39 each for Bic pens. I grabbed a yellow pad of paper, the plastic pen and four Bazooka Joe chunks of gum (2 Strawberry, 2 grape.). I slid over my last 2 dollars and hurried back to the hard wood chair to write down that epiphany.

Something about how reading a poem can make you drop your book, raise your head and gleam about the room at the ambivalent chaos with that "I know something you don't know" grin.

It strikes you from the inside. Begins swelling with anticipation. Forces your arm to scrounge for that stick of lead or ink, anything that will record your moment of brilliance. A napkin or tissue to scribble on, and you find yourself accepting that maybe even this maxi pad at the bottom of your school bag will work. That same anxious thrill that sends you rushing to the campus bookstore, paying \$1.39 for a plastic Bic pen.

~Maria Butts

### Vanilla Daydreams

Vanilla—the scent holds such strong memories in my mind. I always think about the day I was in my first car accident. I could never figure out why I combined the two things together until I sat down one day and thought hard about it. Accident, vanilla, car, vanilla—and suddenly it clicked.

We had been driving home to visit my father's and mother's families for Christmas. I was three at the time and perhaps one of the most annoying children to take on a three hour journey. I can recall my mother insisting on sitting in the back with my brother and me while my uncle sat in the front with my father. It was a cold and snowy day—not a good day for a long trip. My mother kept telling us that Santa was waiting at Grammy's house and we'd have Christmas there. We sang songs—I louder than they and my mother told us stories. As we drove along, the sky grew darker and the puffy, dark gray clouds opened up and released their collection of snow and ice. In what seemed to me like only a matter of seconds later, and in what seemed an eternity to my mother, I came to realize that the car was no longer moving and that I was stuck. I couldn't breathe, I couldn't move, but the smell of vanilla filled my brain. I could hear my father asking if everyone was all right, but I couldn't answer and I couldn't see. I was pinned beneath my mother who had landed on top of me when we slid into the ditch. Vanilla—the smell was intoxicating—or perhaps it was just the lack of oxygen to my brain. I had the craving for a large sugar cookie and a glass of milk right then. Most people I'm sure would have been formulating ways to escape this terrible doom. I just wanted a cookie. I was finally freed from the vanilla hell and was whisked away to a friendly stranger's house. It was warm and inviting and it too smelled like vanilla. I could hear my mother and the older gray haired woman talking, but I didn't understand what they were saying. My mind was still fixated on getting my hands on a cookie. I needed to feel it melt in my mouth and explode with the taste of vanilla. It was an eternity until the nice woman offered up a plate of Christmas cookies. My eyes felt huge as I saw the plate coming towards me. I reached out my hand to take one when my father walked in and announced it was time to go. There was no way I was leaving without eating a sugar cookie. So I cried and cried until my mother let me sit and eat the cookie. I smelled it before I ate it—sort of one last tortuous affair before true bliss.

~Melissa Harris

## **I am five Years Old**

I am five years old and my father is the center of my world. He is a big man with slicked back hair, tattoos, and a John Wayne swagger to him when he walks. To me, my father is everything; I am completely enamored with him. Even when he does wrong, it is okay by me.

We live in the big city called Philadelphia. My father has just come home from the shipyard, where he works all day as a boilermaker. He smells of cigarettes, sweat, and beer. I don't mind the smell, I run to be the first to hug him as he walks through the door and hold on to him as he carries me into the kitchen.

Later after dinner, my father and older brother go down in the basement. They are digging out a crawl space, to make more room. I want to help and plow into the dirt with my toy shovel and Tonka truck. The dirt has this stale smell to it. Digging through the ruins, we find a lot of neat stuff from all the people who lived there before us. I want to help. I want to be big and strong like my father. His white t-shirt has one short sleeve rolled back with a pack of Winston cigarettes stuffed in them. He has this ritual when lighting up his smokes. He pulls this metal lighter out of his back pocket with his left hand. The right hand reaches for the cigarettes on his shoulder. He taps lightly on the top of the pack and pulls one lone Winston out only part way. He grabs the cigarette with his mouth and removes it from the pack. He lights the smoke and places the pack down somewhere. During this whole time telling one of his stories I love to hear. Whenever my father tells a story, everyone would listen. They must of all thought he was a great too. In about ten minutes when his smoke is done, he will ask, "where are my smokes."

I am ten years old and we live in the suburbs outside of Philadelphia. My mother is excited that we finally live in a house, one that she can call her own. In the back yard, I play with my trucks, while my brother and father tear down what he calls the "shit shack." I love to watch my father work; his arms are so big. He has tattoos on both arms, which flex when he works. One day I too will have tattoos of my own. He and my brother are always doing some work around the house. Again they are digging out the basement. I want to help, but am in the way, so get demoted to playing on the dirt pile in the back yard. This dirt from this basement has

the same stale smell as our other basement in Philly. My mom yells at me from the back porch not to get dirty, but I am a kid and cannot help it. After all the work is done, a few friends of my father stop by and they all sit around drinking Pabst Blue Ribbon beer, smoking cigarettes and listening to my dad tell funny little stories. I hang on him, sometimes too much and he tells me to leave him alone. His drinking is much heavier now and I have to be careful not to push it or I will regret it.

I am fifteen and my life sucks. My father has not worked in years and does nothing but sit around the house, smoking, drinking, and telling the same stupid stories. One cannot help but look at him with disgust. We do not get along, because of my attitude and my long wavy hair. My brother ran away to the Navy and I am stuck helping my father around the house. To get out of helping him, I get in trouble at school and have to stay after for detention. I am a smart kid who reads a lot, but cannot keep any decent grades, because I can't study when I am home. One night walking home from detention, I stop before my house; through the window I could see my parents watching the TV. And for some reason, I walked on down the road never looking back.

~James Fromm

"Writing is like this--you dredge for the poem's meaning the way police dredge for a body. They think it is down there under the black water, they work the grappling hooks back and forth."

~Paul Engle

**"I have led you to the land of eliticism" ~Joel Lee**

*"Everything I write is a poetical rant." ~Maria Butts*

"You must stay drunk on writing so reality cannot destroy you." ~Ray Bradbury

"Writing stopped being fun when I discovered the difference between good writing and bad, and even more terrifying, the difference between it and true art. After that, the whip came down."

~Truman Capote

"Rock journalism is people who can't write interviewing people who can't talk for people who can't read." ~Frank Zappa

"A deadline is negative inspiration. Still, it's better than no inspiration at all." ~Rita Mae Brown

"A good novel tells us  
the truth about its hero;  
but a bad novel tells us  
the truth about its  
author."

~G.K. Chesterton

"The last time somebody said, 'I find I can write  
much better with a word processor,' I replied,  
'They used to say the same thing about drugs.'"

~Roy Blount, Jr.

"I'm writing a book. I've  
got the page numbers  
done."

~Steven Wright

"Success is overrated and Man's  
real genius lies in quite the  
opposite direction. Being really  
bad at something requires skill,  
panache, and utter individualism."

~Stephen Pile





